Tells the Facts and Names the Names

CounterPunch

MARCH 1-15 1997 | *Ken Silverstein & Alexander Cockburn* | VOL. 4, NO. 5

■ IN THIS ISSUE

And You Thought the CIA Was Bad

- The Justice Department's legal gangsters run amok
- Playing Dead: Justice's Plan to steal $20 million from Vietnamese vets

Wasting the Lone Star State

- How the nuclear industry plans to turn Texas into a radioactive dump
- How Bernie and Texas liberals are helping them

With a Pal Like Al

- You scratch Gore's Back, He'll Scratch Yours

Those White House Coffees:

- Did Fanjul Bring the Sugar?

Plus:

- The Rich Are Different: The case of the GM Heiress

■

They're Coming!

"Fascism in America is kept solvent by the left-wing hunger for persecution. Liberals will buy anything any bigot writes. If Norman Thomas, the senior American Socialist were to be elected President, he would have to find a minority to hate."

— Lenny Bruce, 1968

The Foulest Job in Babylon:

Al's Bro-in-Law Screws Vets

Fumbling for some legally sustainable prevarication regarding his illegal fund raising initiatives, Vice President Al Gore may feel that he can always call brother-in-law Frank Hunger, head of the Civil Division at the Department of Justice. (Hunger was married to Gore's sister, who died of cancer.) Yet Gore should tread carefully because, if justice is served, Hunger may be headed for disbarment.

Among the many rancid recesses of the federal bureaucracy, there can be few more noisome than the DoJ Civil Division's Commercial Litigation Branch, for which Hunger is responsible. These are the lawyers the government relies on for a defense when the crime is great and the guilt palpable. Soldiers irradiated by the army in callously irresponsible nuclear warfare experiments, Japanese-Americans thrown into wartime concentration camps, families of civil rights workers murdered with the connivance of FBI informers, all have found their pursuit of justice doggedly frustrated by these DoJ hacks. While the objectives of the lawyers are invariably ignoble, the means employed are usually fraudulent and perjurious. In the early 1960s one such lawyer was so overcome with guilty depression at his infamous employment that he killed himself.

One current case luridly epitomizes the nature and the modus operandi of this group, that of the so called "Lost Army Commandos". These were South Vietnamese soldiers on contract to the CIA and the US Army, captured while on sabotage missions in the North during the war and then declared dead by their employers in order to save on the paltry sums obligated to their families.

The highly secret sabotage program was known as OP 34A, and it ran from 1959 to 1968. The commandos were air-dropped or landed by boat with orders to spread the maximum mayhem in North Vietnam. Hanoi's predictable reaction to one such operation in the Gulf of Tonkin enabled Lyndon Johnson and his defense secretary Robert McNamara to fabricate the "Tonkin Gulf incident" and escalate the war in 1964.

Whatever their uses for wider warmongering, the operations always failed on the ground. The US-trained saboteurs were invariably killed or, more often, captured on arrival. The US knew the North had infiltrated the operation, but persisted in sending more units who met the same fate. Thus the numbers of men incarcerated in northern prisons steadily mounted. The soldiers' employment contracts specified that, in the event of capture, their families would continue to receive their full salaries.

In 1970, two years after the last team had been sent in and duly captured, the special operations group in charge of the program concluded that continued payment of salaries to the wives and families was a drain on the treasury and should be terminated. Although hundreds of their men were known to be alive and in prison, the American officers settled on the simple expedient of telling the families that their loved ones and breadwinners were dead and that all payments would therefore cease forthwith.

The authors of this scheme calculated that the men they were abandoning were bound to die in prison at some point and would in any case never be heard from again. However, hundreds did survive,

(continued on p. 4)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gore Watch:

Wheels & Deals of Fortune

Al Gore has never been a political Boy Scout – as **CounterPunch** readers well know – least of all when it comes to campaign finance. Between 1987 and 1992, as the Center for Responsive Politics points out, Gore raised almost $2.5 million as a senator from Tennessee. From his perch on the Senate Commerce Committee, Gore oversaw the telecommunications sector and raised a meaty chunk of that $2.5 million from the communications barons. Today, Gore commands a fundraising network that is among the most efficient in town, and one already being tooled up for his presidential bid in the year 2000.

A Friend of **CounterPunch** (FOC) recently tipped us off to one of Gore's favorite fundraising tactics from his Senate days. Our friend says that Gore would get a group of about five telecommunications company officials and industry lobbyists on a conference line. One person involved in these calls – often Dan Dutko, a major beltway lobbyist who currently works for COMSAT, the Competitive Telecommunications Association, National Cellular Resellers Association and the Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association – would be Gore's designated plant.

Republicans are waiting with glee for photos of Gore toasting the "Butchers of Beijing".

After Gore made his pitch for cash, Dutko, professing to be moved by Gore's passionate interest in the telecommunications field, would agree to pony up a huge campaign contribution. Not wanting to appear to be cheap, the other participants in the conference call would reluctantly match Dutko's offer and Gore would walk away with a nice haul. Incidentally, Dutko was a repeat visitor to the White House these past few years. Along with at least one colleague from his firm, The Dutko Group, he attended several of the notorious fundraising "coffees".

Nor has Gore been Mr. Clean when it comes to helping out the folks who have funded his political career. A new example of his helpful attitude will be furnished during the veep's upcoming trip to China, scheduled for the end of this month (Republicans are waiting with glee for wire service transmission of photos of Gore toasting the "Butchers of Beijing").

During this trip, Gore, another FOC tells us, will press the Chinese to retire their coal-burning power plants and switch over to natural gas. There's nothing wrong with this idea in principle; natural gas is a cleaner way of generating energy than coal. But Gore's prime motive is to drum up business for Enron, the Texas-based natural gas company.

Enron was traditionally a big supporter of the GOP but, like so many members of Corporate America, has cozied up to the Democrats during the Clinton years. The man who most encouraged Enron to do so is Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, who worked closely with the company during his days at Goldman, Sachs. Enron's warmth towards the Democrats has been sealed by the assistance provided to the firm by the Clinton administration. During President Bill's first term, Enron received subsidies for its overseas deals from the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Council, and was invited along on trade junkets organized by the Commerce and Energy departments.

Despite Gore's best efforts, the Chinese may balk at turning over their nation's energy future to Enron. First, it's not at all clear that China has the natural gas reserves that would justify a switch-over to natural gas. Second, accepting the Gore/Enron scheme would automatically require enormous outlays for pipelines to move the gas across the country.

The natural gas plan will also be vigorously opposed by AES, a US corporation which has several coal-plant joint ventures in China. Here, the administration will be conflicted because AES, along with Enron, is a pet energy company of the Clinton administration, as well as a major campaign donor to the Democrats. The CEO of AES/China, Roger Sant, attended a White House coffee on May 17. The cost, which we trust allowed for refills, was $25,000, this being the amount of money Sant gave to the Democratic Party just four days before the affair. He threw in another $2,000 a few days later. AES's top officer, Dennis Bakke, is another big donor to the Democrats, having written a single check for $85,000 back in November of 1995.

AES will soon find its firepower increased as outgoing Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, who still technically heads the department until Federico Pena takes charge later this month, has quietly accepted a seat on AES's board of directors. We expect that the Clinton administration will settle the AES/Enron dispute over China's energy market in its traditional fashion: a bidding war between the interested parties in bribes to the Democratic National Committee. ■

Editors
KEN SILVERSTEIN
ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Co-writers
ANDREW COCKBURN
JEFFREY ST. CLAIR
EYAL PRESS

Production
TERRY ALLEN

Counselor
BEN SONNENBERG

Design
DEBORAH THOMAS

Published twice monthly except August, 22 issues a year:
$40 individuals,
$100 institutions,
$25 student/low-income
CounterPunch.
All rights reserved.
CounterPunch welcomes all tips, information and suggestions. Please call or write our offices.
CounterPunch
P.O. Box 18675,
Washington, DC 20036
202-986-3665 (phone/fax)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

White House Klatsches: Who Went, What They Got

Here at **CounterPunch** we have been reviewing the 1,500 names of those people who attended the Clinton coffee klatsches between January 11, 1995 and August 23, 1996. By far the most heavily represented group were the Washington lobbyists, in a familiar torrent of names: Patton, Boggs; Skadden, Arp; Hill & Knowlton; and Manatt, Phelps, and Phillips.

Chasing close on the lobbyists' heels were the bankers, bond traders and mutual fund operators, including one famous session on May 13, 1996, between the top sixteen bankers in the country, the President of the United States, the Comptroller of the Currency and the Secretary of the Treasury.

Third in frequency was the telecommunications sector headlined by what must have been a tense session with Sumner Redstone, who owns the controlling interest in Viacom, and the company's CEO, Frank Biondi, whom Redstone fired soon thereafter. Also making an appearance were executives from Time/Warner, Disney, Knight-Ridder, Miramax and *The Wall Street Journal.* Remember that in this period the largest "reform" of telecommunications since 1932 was in progress, with billions at stake.

Next came the health care and insurance lobbies keen on killing any new initiative on a national single-payer health care system. The most frequent insurance company sipping coffee with the president was Travelers Group, whose executives attended no less than seven White House klatsches, one of them ennobled by Travelers' CEO Sanford Weill, at $50 million a year the highest paid corporate executive in 1995. Weill made clear his position on product liability lawsuits: he wants them limited.

Close behind were the energy and oil companies, including four strategic visits by Stan McLelland, the executive vice-president of Valero Energy of San Antonio. Valero was a big supporter of NAFTA because the firm had embarked on a joint venture with the Mexican oil company PEMEX. Valero was also mustard-keen on the Mexican bailout, certification of Mexico as a drug-fighting nation, and on US help to Mexico in suppressing any attacks by insurgent groups on PEMEX facilities. McLelland wrote personal cheques to the tune of $130,00 to the Democratic National Committee across the time span of the klatsches. With energy deregulation going through Congress, every oil and gas company was beating a path to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

The rest of the 1,500 names consists mostly of Democratic Party loyalists and functionaries from the public interest movement (organized labor, enviros, women and blacks) rallied by the White House to co-opt their clientele and guide them towards accommodation with the requirements of the corporate sector present at the klatsches.

Deciphering the why and wherefore of the list is not always an arduous task for even the tyro investigator.

Start with the most frequent single visitor to the klatsches, Alfonso Fanjul, no stranger to **CounterPunch** readers. He is the most prominent member of the sugar family which owns vast plantations of sugar cane around the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee in Florida. Hence Fanjul maintains a keen interest in aborting any environmental legislation that might inhibit his companies' capacity to discharge phosphorus into the Everglades.

Fanjul showed up at the klatsches five times, including an October 13, 1995 session with Al Gore who, at that very moment, was crafting another "win-win" compromise protecting the sugar lords while throwing a morsel to the establishment greens by going through the motions of protecting the nation's most famous wetland. The next time Fanjul visited the White House on December 18, 1995, he was in the company of Jeffrey Leonard, the manager of the Global Environment Fund, a group advocating the virtues of green capitalism.

For pleasing pairings at the klatsches it's hard to beat the May 7, 1995 session where Beth Dozoretz, a vice president of the First Hospital Corp. exchanged pleasantries with Tina Flournoy, an executive with tobacco giant Philip Morris. In the same key was a February 22, 1996 session in the Map Room of the White House where Amy M. Rosen, an executive at Lockheed, and Samuel Heyman, CEO of the Nazi-linked chemical company GAF, which utilized concentration camp labor during World War II, sat with Dr. Denise Taft Davidoff, from the Unitarian Universalist Association, and James Armstrong of the First Congregationalist Church. One of the coffee confabs brought together Tipper Gore, who once strove to censor music, with Carol Shields of People for the American Way, which is so keen on protecting the sanctity of the First Amendment that it publishes an annual catalogue of each challenge brought against books and records in public and school libraries.

For those eager to see how quickly a coffee and contribution brought desired results, the October 25, 1995 session is an instructive example. Present were Al Gore and Robert Healy, a vice-president for governmental affairs at ARCO where Gore's great and good friend Katie McGinty, now head of the Council on Environmental Quality, once worked. They came, they met, and ARCO conquered. Over the next year ARCO saw its fondest dreams realized. The administration overturned the 30-year-old ban on the export of Alaskan crude oil, enabling it to be shipped to lucrative Asian markets; allowed the oil men to conceal their profits from public assets; and – the biggest prize of all – pledged to open the 23-million acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska to oil drilling. These favors will add billions to ARCO's profit margins.

From December of 1995 through February of 1996, the administration regarded the support the mainstream enviro groups as of crucial importance in the 1996 race. This concern is duly reflected in the klatsches. On December 15, 1995 two corporate executives who sit on the board of the Wilderness Society sipped coffee with Clinton. One of them was real estate baron Richard Blum – husband of Dianne Feinstein – who is also a long-time friend and sometime business partner of Charles Hurwitz, the corporate raider from Houston who wanted the government to purchase from him at an exorbitant price

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Headwaters redwood forest in northern California. The other exec was David Bonderman, a financier and chairman of Continental Airlines. Bonderman is based in Houston and is also a pal of Hurwitz. Six months after this session, Senator Dianne Feinstein brokered a Headwaters deal for the administration that was highly favorable to Hurwitz. The Wilderness Society was the only national environmental group to praise the bail out.

On February 13, 1996 Clinton hosted a coffee klatsch attended by Peter Meyers, the director of the supposedly apolitical W. Alton Jones Foundation, one of the largest funders of the environmental movement and itself deriving its money from the Citgo Oil Company. At that same meeting were Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club and Andy Goodman, who runs the Environmental Media Association, a Hollywood outfit funded by music mogul David Geffen. Geffen is part of DreamWorks SKG, which hopes to wipe out the largest green space left in LA by building its studios on top of the Ballona wetlands. No slackers here: DreamWorks announced its plans on December 15, 1995. On February 1, 1996, Goodman came through with a widely circulated puff piece extolling the DreamWorks plan as a model for environmentally sensitive development. On February 13, Goodman, Pope and Meyers met with Clinton and Gore. Three weeks later Gore was calling up Sierra Club activists in Los Angeles who had been battling for the wetlands and told them that if the greens were ever to be politically credible, support for the DreamWorks studio was mandatory. It will be recalled that the DreamWorks executives helped raised more than $20 million for the DNC and the Sierra Club later endorsed the Clinton/Gore ticket over the objections of most of its activists, including its former director, David Brower.

Cream and sugar were optional, but the coffee always came with cash, a handshake and a dirty deal.

A week later Clinton met with Mike Gustafson, the head of Westco, a coal-mining company based in Helena, Montana. This klatsch is where another piece of pre-election grandstanding was formulated, with Clinton supposedly saving Yellowstone National Park from the ravages of a gold mine owned by the Canadian giant Noranda. Noranda wanted $65 million in cash to hand over mineral leases on federal lands it had purchased for less than $10,000. But Clinton faced a problem: Montana's conservative Senator Conrad Burns had vowed to block any appropriation of funds to buy out Noranda. Gustafson offered the solution. The federal government could sell his company coal lands in the plains of eastern Montana for below market rates (which Westco would strip mine and export to Japan) and use the cash to pay off Noranda. This is the exact deal that has now been proposed.

The last coffee klatsch was by no means the least. On August 23, 1996, Bernard Rapoport, insurance tycoon and underwriter of the *Texas Observer*, was in attendance at the White House for a session with Clinton and Gary Jacobs, the CEO of Laredo National Bank of Texas. This institution is now undergoing a criminal probe by the Justice Department, suspected as being an entrepôt for Mexican drug money. ■

(Foulest Job, cont. from p. 1)

were released and eventually, after traumatic reunification with their families, began wondering what happened to their pay. Many of them emigrated to the United States.

In 1995 their case was taken up by Miami lawyer John Mattes, who sued the government on behalf of all the survivors he could trace, a number that eventually grew to 330. He asked only for the back pay contractually owed them, a modest $2000 per year per man.

The CIA and the Pentagon reached for the Commercial Litigation Branch to do the dirty work. At issue was whether there was any proof that the men had been openly and contractrually employed by the US. The branch lawyers straightfacedly denied in court that any such documented proof existed. In fact, as they well knew, there were some 500,000 documents relating to OP 34A in the classified files.

When Mattes discovered the existence of this cache they lied again, claiming that "those documents are classified and they are not necessary to the stated complaint, and every indication is that those documents do not contain a single thing ... that will assist the plaintiffs to plead their case". But the wily Mattes succeeded in gaining access to the documents and found that they had everything to do with his case, since they included, along with other salient evidence, payroll records proving the men's employment by the military.

As the lies and obstruction continued, publicity about the commandos' plight encouraged Congress to pass a rider to the Defense Authorization Act at the end of 1996 telling the government to give the men their money — some $20 million. Forcing the case to trial now appeared superfluous.

But even now, the government was unwilling to give up. The Civil Division Attornies slyly suggested to Mattes that he drop the case in view of the congressional action, while the Pentagon Comptroller argued that, whatever the US Congress had thought it was doing, the law did not compel payment. Most recently, the government lawyers have motioned that the whole case be started afresh.

In the course of this deliberately drawn out process three of the men have died.

The Justice Department regularly seeks and obtains sanctions against criminal defense attorneys for mounting a "fraudulent defense" — *i.e.*, presenting a case which they know to be untrue. The sanctions can include judicial rebuke, heavy fines and disbarment. Mattes now intends to seek application of such sanctions against the officials responsible for the squalid maneuvers outlined above.

The responsible official is Frank Hunger, whose name is to be found at the top of all government documents relating to the litigation. He is therefore potentially liable to disbarment unless, following the example of that conscience-stricken lawyer in the early 1960s, he does the honorable thing. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tex Mix:

What Do Nukes, Sarah Weddington, Ann Richards and Bernie Sanders Have In Common?

A clutch of prominent liberals, including ex-governor Ann Richards; Sarah Weddington, the lead attorney on Roe v. Wade and current Rep. Bernie Sanders of Vermont are pressing for Texas to become a national dump site for the nuclear industry. Shoulder to shoulder with these progressives are of course the nuclear industry and Texas governor, George Bush, Jr.

For their dream to come true, Congress must first pass the Texas-Maine-Vermont Compact Bill, a measure that would enable nuclear power plants in those three states – and eventually others – to ship huge amounts of low-level radioactive waste to west Texas. (Sanders is one of twenty-two co-sponsors of the Compact Bill in the House of Representatives.)

This is a textbook case of environmental racism. The planned destination of the nuclear waste is Sierra Blanca, a small town in west Texas that is 60 per cent Hispanic and 40 per cent poor. Perfect, in other words, as a repository of waste from New England and other parts of Texas; ideal too for nuclear utilities, including the Maine Yankee Atomic Power company.

The Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission has already declared the Sierra Blanca site environmentally sound. People from Texas and Mexico who live in the surrounding area disagree, noting that the town is spread over numerous fault lines. The 3,000 residents of Sierra Blanca and nearby Hudspeth County somewhat naturally oppose the Compact plan.

For a flavor of the bipartisan spirit of lobbying for the nuke industry, consider the role of Ann Richards who, as governor, pushed the Compact Bill through the Texas state legislature. Her rationale was that importing waste from Maine and Vermont was the best way to prevent *other* states from dumping their waste in Texas. But in fact, establishment of an interstate dump in Sierra Blanca, while earning Texas $50 million in fees, will more likely turn the state into a magnet for nuclear refuse from across the country.

Richards seems untroubled by such prospects. Quitting the governor's mansion in 1994, she became a lobbyist for Texas Utilities, which owns the Comanche Peak nuclear plant near Dallas, and which hopes to be dumping in Sierra Blanca in the near future. "It's just outrageous that she talks one way and would then be into something like this for posterity," complains Sissy Farenthold, the former state lawmaker who opposes the Compact plan.

Richards is not alone. Sarah Weddington of Roe v. Wade fame now lobbies for Maine Yankee. Last year she earned between $10,000-24,999 for her services. It was Weddington's support that convinced many Texas state legislators to approve the Compact Bill back in 1993. "She was a pivotal actor," says Don Gardner, a founder of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. "She was all over the place ... lining up votes, even to the extent of going out to the county fairs and buying the champion steer and that kind of thing."

Sierra Blancans know from experience how swiftly Texas politicians like Bush and Richards can be persuaded to lay out the welcome mat for toxic polluters. In 1995, after a huge PR campaign, the Merco Joint Venture company of Long Island was awarded a $168 million contract – approved in a record 23 days by the Texas legislature – to haul thousands of tons of toxic sewage sludge from New York City to Sierra Blanca. The sludge now travels from the sewers of Manhattan to the Chihuahuan desert, where it is sprayed over a 91,000-acre area.

The nuclear dump would make things much worse. Last year, more than 500 children from Ciudad Acuna, Mexico, traveled by bus to Austin and tried persuade Governor Bush to abandon his support for the proposed dump. Several Mexican state representatives as well as dozens of national and international antinuclear groups have pointed out that locating the dump in this community violates the 1983 La Paz Agreement, in which the US and Mexico agreed to "prevent, reduce, and eliminate sources of pollution which affect the border area".

Which brings us to the story of Waste Control Specialists (WCS), a Pasadena-based company that is trying to establish a multi-million dollar radioactive dump at a landfill north of Sierra Blanca.

WCS already disposes hazardous waste at the Andrews County site, but several years ago it decided it wanted to carve out a niche in the lucrative field of nuclear waste disposal as well. The company faced one significant problem: Texas state law forbids private companies from disposing of radioactive material obtained from other private and state utilities.

Ken Bigham, chief executive officer and founder of WCS, soon discovered that by receiving federal waste from the Department of Energy – rather than from state and private utilities – WCS could qualify as a federal contractor, thereby skirting state environmental

SUBSCRIPTION INFO

Enter/renew subscription here:

- ☐ One year individual, $40
- ☐ One year institution, $100
- ☐ One year student/low-income, $25
- ☐ Please send back issue(s) _____ ($3/issue)
- ☐ I am enclosing a separate sheet for gift subscriptions

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

_____

Payment must accompany order.
Add $10 for foreign subscriptions.
Make checks payable to: **CounterPunch.**
Return to: **CounterPunch.**
P.O. Box 18675
Washington, DC 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

regulations. It's an alluring prospect for the company, as the cost of cleaning up DOE nuclear waste around the country is estimated at $5 billion. As Bigham explained excitedly to the *Houston Business Journal*, "The DOE could issue a permit and I could go in business tomorrow."

Unfortunately for Bigham and WCS, the federal government will not okay the arrangement without formal approval from Texas, which means the decision is ultimately in the hands of Governor Bush. In a forthcoming article in the *Texas Observer*, Nate Blakeslee cites an internal memo that shows Bush apparently agonizing over the decision, asking whether he should "stand by while West Texas becomes the nation's dumping ground for waste that no one else will take".

As with Richards, it's a fair bet that Bush will roll over. One of the chief investors in WCS is Harold Simmons, a prominent Dallas billionaire and Bush campaign supporter. Simmons has put $25 million into WCS and both he and Bigham say the Governor is "aware" of their desires in regard to the dump site proposal.

Also "aware" is Texas Tech University, which takes the realistic view that the function of an institution of higher learning is to serve industry. In a proposal submitted to the Department of Energy last December, WCS outlined a plan in which Texas Tech would become "captain" of the dump in Andrews County, providing expertise in areas such as geoscience, water resources and atmospheric science.

The University's vice chancellor, James Crownson, has announced that even though it is not a regulatory agency of any kind, his school will also review and approve the WCS application. In other words, "Texas Tech will serve as the facilitator to allow toxic dumpers to leapfrog state regulators," as one local resident explains. Texas Tech is not entirely without experience in such matters. In the past, it accepted $1.5 million to research the dumping of sewage sludge in Sierra Blanca, one of the main reasons the state gave the proposal fast-track approval.

On the bright side, Texas has plenty of populists and radicals mustered to the fight. Members of the Sierra Blanca Legal Defense Fund are readying for upcoming hearings on the dump in Sierra Blanca. Though they believe those hearings are basically a rubber stamp, dump opponents received some good news on March 1, when the state legislature voted to eliminate all funding for the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Disposal Authority , the agency which is responsible for developing the dump in Sierra Blanca. ■

The Trust Fund Kids *(An Occasional Series)*

This week's installment concerns Maryanne Mott, of the well-heeled Mott family which traces its bountiful supplies of the green stuff to General Motors. Go to Washington in search of liberals doing good works and pretty soon you fetch up at outcroppings of Mott foundations headquartered in Flint, Michigan.

So when Maryanne Mott, summer resident of a ranch in the Gallatin range north of Yellowstone in Montana, launched a lawsuit three years ago challenging a timber sale on school trust lands adjacent to her property, it seemed like one more case of a rich person doing the right thing.

It soon emerged that only months before her lawsuit, Ms. Mott had sallied forth, chainsaw in hand, and laid waste to timber on her own land, right next to the school trust land timber she preferred to remain vertical. These unseemly events occurred within the boundary of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, which Ms. Mott was presumably pledged to protect, since at that time she was on the board of directors of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

Discovering Ms. Mott's double standard on logging, the Montana state legislature swiftly passed a bill requiring anyone who challenges a timber sale on state lands to post a hefty bond. This spelled disaster for people of modest means, such as ranchers or environmentalists trying to slow down the chainsaws. But when Steve Kelly, an environmental organizer based in Bozeman, tried to contact Ms. Mott to enlist her help in challenging this unconstitutional inhibition, she would not return his phone calls. The bill sailed through and now only people like Maryanne Mott can afford to challenge logging on state lands. ■

CounterPunch
P.O. Box 18675
Washington, DC 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED